



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

FROM: John Frassinelli, Chief
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: August 17, 2015

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum #13-15 REVISED**
Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs

This memorandum updates the previous version of the Connecticut State Department of Education's Operational Memorandum 13-15, Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs. **This memorandum clarifies that vegetables and yogurt used in smoothies may credit toward meeting the snack meal pattern requirements.**

Since fruit, vegetable, milk and yogurt smoothies are an increasingly common food items in the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has modified their guidance on smoothies to allow for the crediting of vegetables and yogurt in smoothies at any meal or snack offered through the CNP, including supper for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). These additional ingredients provide variety to program operators seeking to include appealing and nutritious smoothies on their menus. This memorandum replaces all previous guidance on smoothies.

Use of Smoothies in Child Nutrition Programs

Historically, the USDA did not permit fruit smoothies to contribute toward the milk or meat/meat alternate requirements at breakfast. This crediting policy was based on the premise that service of recognizable forms of food supports the educational aspects of the meal programs and simplifies program operation. Additionally, the [*Dietary Guidelines for Americans*](#) emphasizes that the majority of fruit consumed should come from whole fruits, including fresh, canned, frozen and dried forms, rather than from juice. However, there has been increased use and identification of smoothies as a recognizable food item. In many cases, smoothies can also be a healthful food option. As a result, in July 2012, the FNS allowed milk contained in smoothies prepared in-house to credit toward the meal patterns for the CNP.

Since then, some program operators have suggested that allowing yogurt in smoothies to credit toward the meat/meat alternate requirement at breakfast may provide a more acceptable taste and texture, which could help increase participation in the breakfast program while reducing waste. In recognition of these benefits, FNS allowed crediting of yogurt in smoothies as a meat/meat alternate for the breakfast meal pattern beginning in July 2013. **FNS has further extended the allowance of crediting yogurt as a meat/meat alternate in smoothies for any meal, including snacks and supper for CACFP and SFSP, effective July 22, 2015.**

When CNP serve smoothies that contribute to the fluid milk component, it is critical that food service staff continue to offer a variety of fluid milk choices and monitor milk consumption to ensure that the service of smoothies does not compromise student consumption of milk. It is also important to recognize that the addition of yogurt to a smoothie does not serve as a substitution for fluid milk. CNP must continue to offer fluid milk separately to meet the milk component requirement in all CNP.

Crediting of Fruits and Specific Vegetables

Smoothies containing vegetables have become more popular. Some program operators want to provide this option to contribute toward the meal pattern requirements. Currently, 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice, and 100 percent fruit and vegetable juice blends count toward the meal pattern requirements. To be consistent with meal pattern requirements, the FNS is amending its policy to permit the crediting of vegetables contained in smoothies. This includes any vegetable subgroup in the following forms: fresh, frozen or canned vegetables; 100 percent vegetable juice; and 100 percent vegetable and fruit juice blends.

Pureed vegetables and fruits (fresh, frozen, or canned) served in a smoothie credit as **juice**, and as such are subject to the limitations regarding juice service. These requirements are indicated below.

- **National School Lunch Program (NSLP):** Fruit juice cannot exceed half (50 percent) of the total fruits offered during the week and vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the total vegetables offered during the week.
- **School Breakfast Program (SBP):** Fruit juice, together with vegetable juice (including fruit and vegetable juice blends), cannot exceed half of the total fruits offered during the week.
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):** Fruit juice, together with vegetable juice (including fruit and vegetable juice blends), cannot exceed half of the daily fruits/vegetables component at lunch.
- **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP):** Fruit juice, together with vegetable juice (including fruit and vegetable juice blends), cannot exceed half of the daily fruits/vegetables component at lunch.

Vegetables from the dry beans and peas subgroup may credit toward the vegetable meal pattern requirement as juice when served in a smoothie. This policy on the crediting of vegetables in smoothies applies to all CNP meals and snacks.

The USDA's revised questions and answers on the crediting of smoothies is attached, and is also available on the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Operational Memoranda 2015](#) and [Program Guidance](#) Web pages.

Questions may be directed to:

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JF:sff

Attachment

Important: This is a numbered Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) operational memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain in a binder for future reference. All CSDE operational memoranda are posted on the CSDE's [Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs](#) Web page.